

V. GOLYSHKIN

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OF THE LARGE HOUSE

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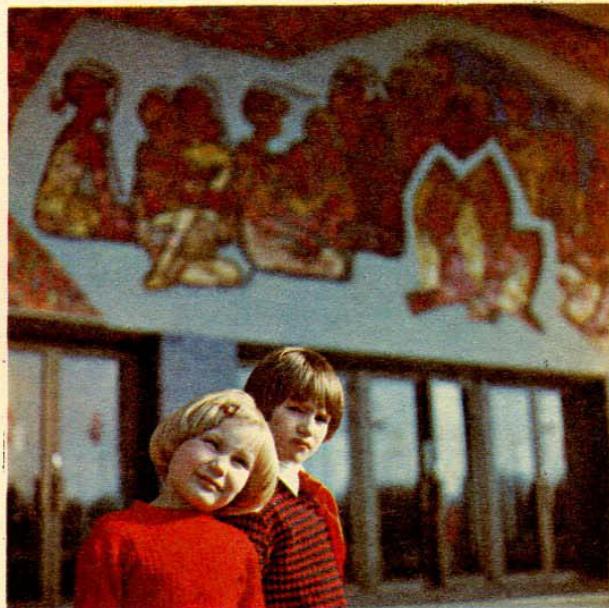
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THE LITTLE MAGICIANS OF THE LARGE HOUSE

V. GOLYSHKIN

Translated from the Russian by *Jan Butler*

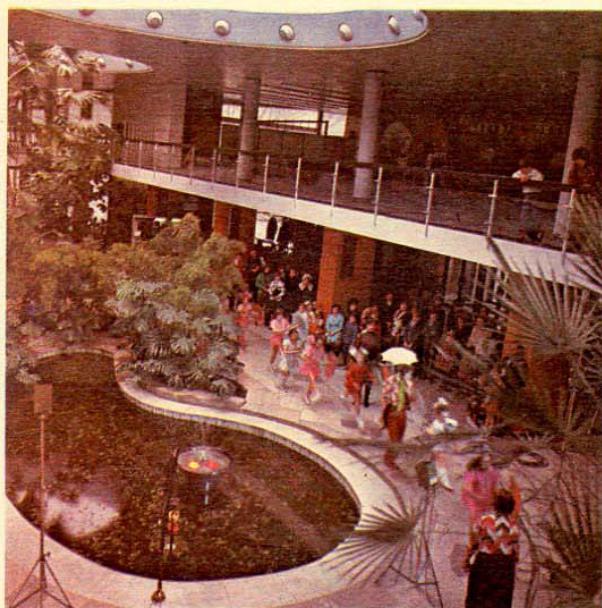


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Let's go hand-in-hand to a wonderland. Our journey isn't as long as it is steep because the wonderland we're going to is high on the hills. The hills are steep but you won't notice. We won't have to climb up them ourselves. Why not? The answer is very simple. We'll be carried up to the hills by a magic stairway.

One, two, three! Look! We're on

writer. Long ago, when the Civil War* was being waged in the Soviet country and working people rose up to fight against the enemies of the Revolution, Malchish-Kibalchish gave his life to free the workers and peasants. And immortalized in bronze, he now stands by the entrance to the world of magic and protects the happiness of the small magicians of the large house.



the Lenin Hills and Moscow, the Soviet capital, lies below us on the banks of the shimmering blue river.

But where's our wonderland?

Look round and listen carefully. Can you hear clinking swords and the sound of a bugle? When you enter the world of magic the first thing you see is a bronze statue of a boy on a pedestal. He is called Malchish-Kibalchish and he is the hero of a story by Arkady Gaidar, Soviet children's favourite

There's the house. Look, it's like a handsome giant towering above the hill and its blocks are outstretched arms inviting us to come in.

Let's accept his invitation and go into the house which is called the Moscow City Pioneers' Palace.

No, wait a minute. First tell me if you can see the tropics from the Lenin Hills? No, of course not—they're too

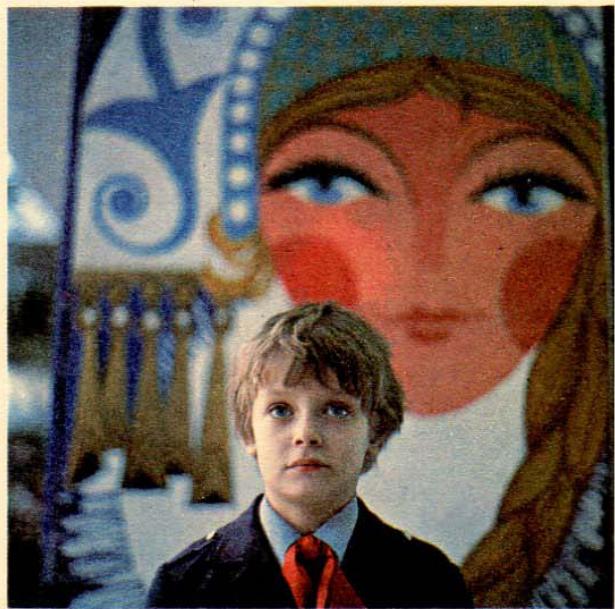
* The Civil War and the military intervention was in 1918-20 in Soviet Russia.



far-away! But you can see the tropics on the Lenin Hills. What do you have to do? You simply have to push open a glass door and you're in the Hall of Eternal Summer. Do you recognise the palms, bamboo trees and cypresses. Those bananas are growing on grass. You see, banana plants are simply giant grass. All this has been grown by the little magicians who

sword in one hand and a bugle in the other. But the film isn't about him. Malchish-Kibalchish is the emblem of this unique film studio which is called "The Lenin Hills" and releases films which are exclusively made by children: young scriptwriters, directors, actors and cameramen.

But now let's look at the screen. Something strange is happening.



are known here as young naturalists.

You want to count all the plants in the Hall of Eternal Summer? That'll be difficult because there're over five hundred of them! Anyway, we haven't time. Other magicians are waiting for us...

Where are we? It's dark like in a cinema before a film showing. And that's precisely where we are! Look, the screen's lit up and we can see our friend Malchish-Kibalchish with a

Children are going into school with a lovely little dog.

A dog in school? Yes, it so happened that the star of the film couldn't leave him at home and had to take him with her. The dog has been hidden under the desk but instead of sitting quietly, the silly thing suddenly begins to bark in the middle of a lesson.

This creates an uproar. Coming to each other's rescue, the children take the blame on themselves: they say that it was them barking... Their cunning



works, but not for long. In the end the teachers discover the dog and to the pupils' amazement also begin to feel responsible for it. The pupils and teachers are now united by a common concern: "What if the headmaster finds out?" That, by the way, is what the film is called: *What if the Headmaster Finds Out?* And the headmaster does find out and orders them to bring the dog

another tribute—The Grand Prix which the small magicians who made the film received at a film festival in Hungary.

And do you know how many films the "Lenin Hills Film Studio" has released? Forty documentaries and twenty feature films. That's sixty films in the forty years the film studio has been in operation.



to his study. The pupils are terrified of what is going to happen. The most nosy ones can't stand the suspense and decide to peep into the headmaster's study. And what do they see? Their stern headmaster is sitting in his terrifying study and feeding the dog something delicious.

And that's the end. The screen goes black and the light flashes on in the cinema. You're smiling. That's wonderful! Your smile is the best tribute to the film. But it has received

A few steps down the corridor we suddenly are faced on all sides by boys and girls with kind, angry, jovial, gloomy, impish, open-hearted, calm and anxious expressions on their faces. What kind of magic is this? It's not magic at all. These are the subjects of the photo-portraits gazing at us from the walls, taken and developed by young photographers. These photo-portraits can not only be seen here on the Palace's walls. They often appear on the pages of the pioneers' and



Komsomol newspapers and even on the pages of *Pravda*, the main Soviet newspaper.

Listen, someone is reciting:

*"A lone white sail shows for an instant
Where gleams the sea, an azure streak..."*

Then the same voice repeats the same words about the sail and the sea. That's strange, isn't it? No, there's

But where is the theatre, I mean, the theatre building? There it is, near the studio. It's a real theatre with a stage, auditorium, all the necessary theatrical equipment and a poster with a list of plays: *The War Secret* by A. Gaidar; *The Distant Land* by Y. Shvarts; *The Fraud* by A. Barto... The theatre gives productions not only in the Pioneers' Palace, it also travels to schools and



nothing strange about these lines being persistently repeated over and over again: young actors' study groups are being held behind the door in front of us. You see what is written on the door: "The Young Muscovites' Theatre Studio". We'll quietly open the door and go into the theatre studio.

*"What left it in its homeland distant?
In alien parts what does it seek?"*

A young actor is reciting this poem by the great Russian poet Lermontov.

workers' clubs in Moscow and the Moscow region.

The children are very fond of their theatre. Once the theatre visited a Young Pioneer Camp to give a performance of *Our Fathers' Young Days*. The curtain was due to rise at any moment but the hero in the main part still hadn't arrived. The actors were very upset. Suddenly they saw the "hero" come running in.

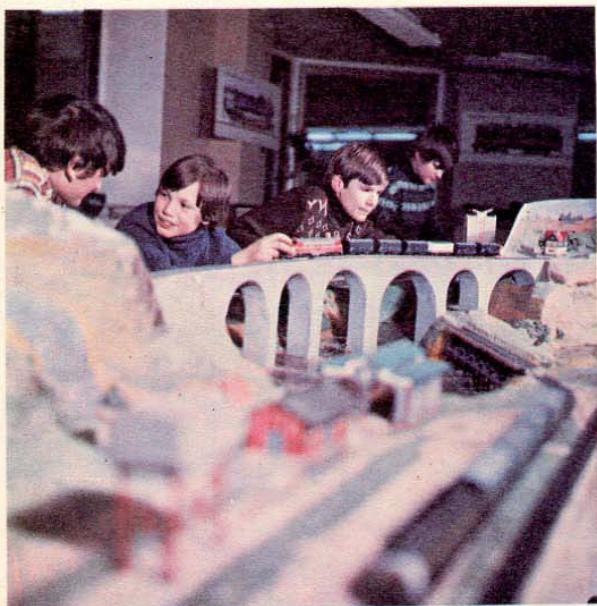
"Where have you been?"
"Up a drain-pipe."

They decided he was joking, but in fact he wasn't joking at all. After the performance he explained everything.

It turned out that he had been punished and locked in the flat which was on the second floor. The only way to escape was through the window. So, he used the drain-pipe. His parents weren't going to pat him on the head, of course, but the main thing was that

they'll make when they're grown up! But instead of waiting for that, we'll have a look at what they've already done.

The station is cylindrical and cone-shaped at the top. But this isn't a cone, it's an aircraft. When the station has landed on a planet and fulfilled its task, the aircraft detaches itself and flies back to Earth.



he hadn't let his friends down and stopped the performance.

And now imagine that you're in space. You're flying in a make-believe rocket and landing on a make-believe planet. Actually, you don't have to imagine the rocket. The young model-makers' work is there in front of you. It's called a space station.

Of course, the stations now in orbit round the moon are more complex, but don't forget that this one was made by children of your age. Just imagine what

The space station has another secret device. A door suddenly opens at the side and the station stretches out a mechanical arm to the planet: hello, planet, let's get acquainted, I'm from the Lenin Hills on Earth.

You don't need me to tell you that the station's mechanical arm is for collecting rock. But what happens if it can't find anything suitable nearby? The young designers have already thought of this. A cross-country vehicle then crawls out from under the station



and sets off on a journey across the planet.

There are lots of doors in the corridor and each one holds a secret of some kind. Which one shall we open—this one? A sailing vessel sweeps towards us like a white swan. We're obviously in the ship-designers' room. Look round and you'll see a whole fleet in models—from an old frigate to a

railwaymen. They are so busy watching and trying out their models that they don't pay any attention to us. Well, let's not get in their way and walk on!

A lot of boys and girls are sitting at a long table facing each other. They are all making something. Each of them has got some cardboard, glue, scissors and some pieces of coloured glass. A serious-looking person is sitting at the



fantastic-looking ship which in fact doesn't need water because it moves on a cushion of air.

But what's in store for us behind this door?

You can see what's inside through the glass door without opening it: mountains, fields, ravines, forests, rivers and bridges. A silver maze of rails runs between them, and multi-coloured trains on the same scale as all the rest here rush along the rails. This is the kingdom of young

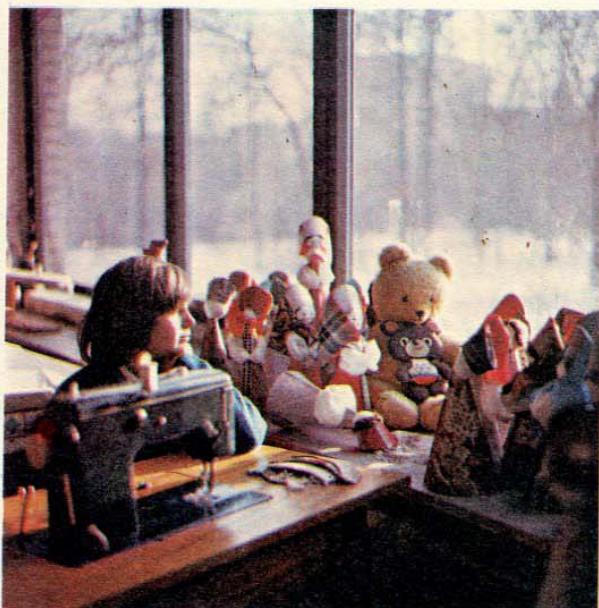
head of the table. Now and then everyone looks at him. He is the head of the pioneers' toy workshop and the boys and girls at the table are his pupils, apprentice toy-makers.

The instructor also has some cardboard, glue, scissors and some coloured glass in front of him. And now you'll see how he's conducting the study group.

"Follow what I'm doing," he says and rolls the cardboard into a tube. He sticks it down, fills it with coloured

pieces of glass, puts two pieces of glass in the open ends and glues paper strips round their edges. Have you guessed they're making magic tubes—kaleidoscopes—which are great fun to look through! When they've finished, they must hand them to the instructor. Listen!

"We've finished work for today. Good-bye!" the instructor says.



Strangely enough, none of the children hurry over to him to give in their work. On the contrary, they hide them in their satchels and take them away.

It's an interesting workshop, isn't it? You come and make what you like and then take it away. Yes, the pioneers' toy workshop is certainly unusual: they don't keep anything for themselves but give it all away to schools! And guess how much they make! A thousand table games a year!

There's quite an unusual room

behind this enormous glass door. Toddlers come here to play while their older brothers and sisters study in a group of some kind. They're all busy doing something. One is building a house with a crane, another has opened a shop and is selling sausages and cheese, a third is looking after a dolly kindergarten and putting the naughty ones to bed. Although he's a boy, if you



ask him what his job is, he'll reply without a moment's hesitation: "I'm a nanny!"

It makes no difference that everything is make-believe in this play-group. It is taken just as seriously as real work!

A smart little girl in a brand new dress comes along the corridor towards us. The fashionable young lady keeps looking round and when she notices someone is looking at her, she breaks into a smile. Well, of course, she's





proud of her new dress but do you know why?

The little girl's mother brought her to the Palace and enrolled her in the ballroom dancing group. Since then the little girl has been coming to the Palace twice a week. "How are you getting on?" her mother asked, meaning her dancing lessons. "You'll soon see," the little girl replied with some-

There are lots of skilled seamstresses like her in the Palace. They make all kinds of things, and clothe themselves from head to foot.

The embroidery group is situated next to the sewing group. Look at that jolly elephant under an umbrella! And doesn't that crow look real! If you shouted out the words of Krylov, the fable-writer: "Sing, sweetie, don't be



thing completely different in mind.

And then one day she came home in this smart dress. When her mother saw her, she gasped: "Where did you buy it? Where did the money come from?" "It cost me nothing," the little girl replied, "I made it myself!"

It turned out that at the Palace she was not studying in the ballroom dancing group but in a completely different one, the sewing group. And look what a lovely dress she made!

shy!", the simple piebald bird would drop the piece of orange cheese it's holding in its mouth.

"Three fair maidens spun by the window late at night..." This is a verse, from the famous *Tale of Tsar Saltan* by the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. These fair maidens are a piece of embroidery. How beautifully they've been done! What's more, all the embroidery work here is of this quality. Quite rightly, the artistic work of the small magicians from the Lenin Hills

has been greatly admired at exhibitions in Havana, Berlin, Paris and Montreal...

How spotlessly clean and white everything is! Are we in a hospital? Not at all: we're guests of the young cooks in their kitchen. How about trying their Ukrainian beetroot soup? Their beetroot soups are superb. Or perhaps you'd rather try their Greek-style

woman was amazed how the boy would manage to cook something, but as she could not get up, she let him cook something.

She began eating the first course and marvelled how delicious it was! Then she began eating the second course and glanced suspiciously at the young cook. Perhaps some grown-ups were helping him in the kitchen? Finally, she could



rissoles. If you have a taste, you'll be very impressed. That's not to mention the soufflet for the desert! It's scrumptious!

One day a woman fell ill in a large apartment house. She couldn't run to the shops or cook. She called in the boy next door to help her. She asked him to run to the shops and buy this and that...

The boy did as he was asked. Then he told her to stay in bed while he got something ready to eat. The sick

not resist asking him who cooked it. "I did," replied the boy. "But where did you learn how to?" "At the Pioneers' Palace on the Lenin Hills..."

Where have all these stones come from? All kinds of stones from tiny pebbles to huge rocks are lying all over the place. But they're not just scattered about, are they? They're neatly packed in boxes and on shelves and in glass cases, and the name of the mineral, origin and the place where it was found is written on labels.

These stones are only part of the collection of the Palaces' young tourists and local lore students. Here, too, are other results of their scientific work: photographs and descriptions of historical places, household utensils of ancient peoples, exhibits from excavations which the young archeologists carried out in the south of the Soviet Union and in the Moscow

Now let's go to the stars! You see that spiral staircase: let's climb up it. Is this a circus? The dome we're under really does look like a circus top. But this isn't a circus, it's an observatory. This is where the Palace's astral photographers work, photographing the Moon, Venus, Mars and Jupiter... On a photo Jupiter looks tiny but it's in fact huge and bigger than all the other



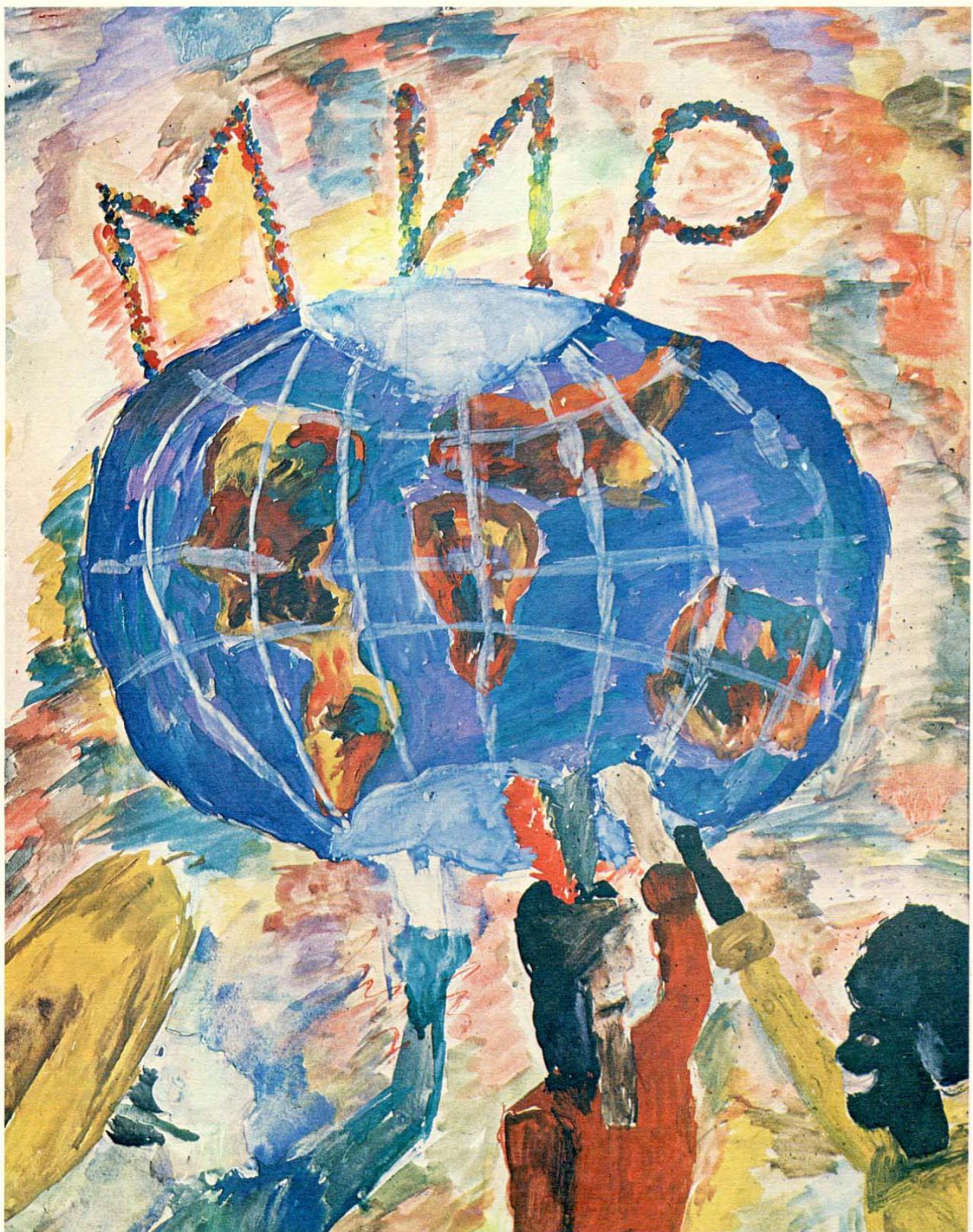
region.

By the way, what sort of transportation would you have chosen to tour around Moscow three hundred million years ago? You don't know? Then ask the magic calendar on the wall and it will answer shortly: boat!

The calendar was also made by the young students of local lore and explorers who ride and walk all over Moscow, its districts and many other parts of the country.

heavenly bodies in the solar system.

The telescope used by the young photographers and artists for taking photograph is in the middle of the room. I said artists? Did I make a slip? No, I didn't. Look at this drawing from life which is also of the planet Jupiter. It's really amazing, isn't it? There's a red spot on one side. But there's nothing unreal about the drawing. There really is a red spot on the planet. What is amazing is that the young astral artist's sharp eye noticed this



spot and accurately reproduced it in the drawing. This surely entitles him to be ranked among the young magicians, doesn't it?

Now we have visited the Palace's planetarium where the young space explorers study the sky in the past, present and future, let's walk on. We have yet to see the aeronautics and cosmic section.



Look at those planes! They don't have wings or engines but they seem to glide in the air. True, if you look more carefully, you'll see they are not gliding but attached to appliances which support them in the air between the ceiling and the floor. But they do have real cockpits. There are three of them and each is occupied by a small pilot in a complete flying suit.

The flights operator is sitting in front of a control panel on which

multi-coloured lights are flashing. He is wearing earphones and holding a microphone.

"Number 1 ready for take-off," a pilot's voice comes through his earphones.

"Clearance for take-off given!" the operator replies. Look what the plane's doing! It's lurching this way and that, dipping its nose and then its tail.



Perhaps something's wrong with the engine? No, everything's alright. The pilot is simply going through the various stages of the flight. This is all very interesting but we've yet to see the cosmonauts.

This large hall looks like a games room. There are some cleverly-devised roundabouts and wheels on which sturdy little boys are turning somersaults and spinning round. You think they're just having fun? Nothing of the sort, they're working! They're

training to be nimble, strong and to easily endure strain. Otherwise, you can't become a cosmonaut, can you? They learn the theory of space flights and the mechanism of spaceships somewhere else—in their space club. This club, by the way, is often visited by real cosmonauts.

Some boys and girls are sitting at a long table and sorting through letters.



We're not in a post office, are we? No, we're in the international friendship club. So, the letters which the children are sorting through have been sent to the club? That's right. The friendship club on the Lenin Hills corresponds with children all over the world. In doing so, the children learn French, English, Italian, Polish, Bulgarian, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Hindi and many other languages.

If you ask the young club members what is more lasting than anything else

in the world, they will answer that friendship is!

A line of pure white, red-beaked swans are gliding over a tiny, snow-white lake. This is incredibly fine crochet work! But it's even more remarkable how this "Swan Lake" came to the international friendship club on the Lenin Hills.

One day a greetings letter on the



young anti-fascists' day was smuggled into a Portuguese prison where anti-fascists were imprisoned. It was signed by the international friendship club of the Moscow Pioneers' Palace. Soon afterwards a parcel containing the "Swan Lake" was smuggled out of the prison and sent to Moscow. "Swan Lake", which was crocheted by women anti-fascists, is an affectionate token of the Portuguese and Soviet pioneers' friendship.

And now that fascism in Portugal has



been defeated, Soviet children send presents of home-made crafts, pieces of embroidery and drawings to this country by the ordinary post.

What's more, these souvenirs are not only sent to Portugal but to the most varied countries of the world. And friends abroad do not leave them unanswered. Look what splendid gifts foreign visitors have presented to the

because the crocodile is in a pool behind a strong grate.

But the parrot who also lives here is at liberty. Seeing us, he bows and introduces himself: "Zhakonya!"

Zhakonya! Oh, how polite he is! But the green marmosets, dashing about at top speed, take no notice of us. And the reddish-brown squirrels have no time for us as they scamper up and



friendship club, and what a lot they have told during their meetings with Soviet children about their campaign for peace and friendship between peoples! Whenever friends meet, they always have something to talk about, don't they?

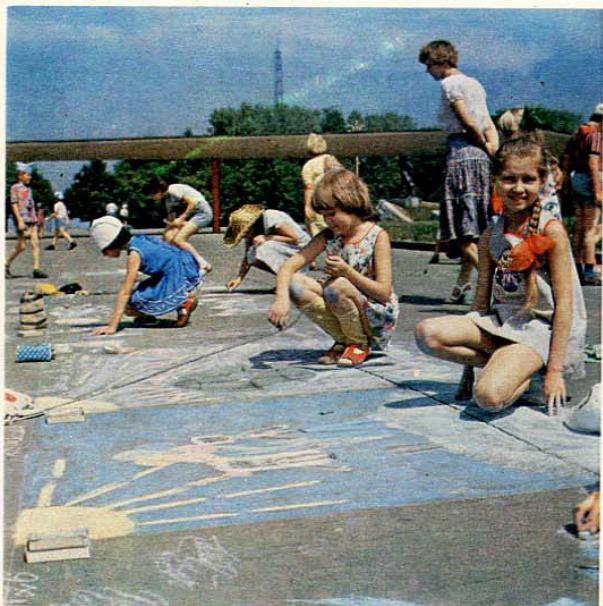
But let's walk on...

What have we here—a crocodile? Yes and it's not a rubber toy but a real live one, and if you put your finger in its mouth it will bite it off! But even if you want to, you won't be able to

down. The tortoise is far quieter. It's lifted a leg and is deciding whether to go forwards or backwards. The tomtits are twittering, the frogs are croaking and only the owls sit quiet and still.

You, of course, have already guessed that we are in the Palace's Pets Corner. Here, too, are aquariums full of exotic fish. But what's that under the glass roof over there? A greenhouse. It's got a lot of exotic plants from all over the world which have been carefully grown

by the small magicians from the Lenin Hills. But the young naturalists don't sit about and wait for someone to bring them a rare specimen, water-plant, bird, fish or animal. They themselves go out looking for them, travelling all over our country which is, as is well known, quite a large part of the world. They bring their finds back, study, grow and breed them...



There are two red books on the working table in the Pets Corner which record the chief anxiety and constant concerns of the young naturalists. What's written in them? Let's open the first one. Why, it contains nothing but photographs! Perhaps this is a photoalbum? Wait a minute, here's the text. How sad it is. The caption under the photograph says that the photographed animal is on the verge of extinction and has to be saved at all costs. It's now understandable why the

books are red. Red is the colour of concern... They are concerned about the existence of the white crane, desert sparrow, whitebreasted dove and many other vanishing species of birds and animals.

The second red book is entirely devoted to plants. The ones on the black pages no longer exist. They are depicted only in drawings. The ones on



yellow pages still exist and dried specimens are given. They still exist but if they are not looked after, they will soon become extinct. This is true, for instance, of this beautiful flower, a kind of buttercup. Although it is on a yellow page, it is a rare flower. Guess how it came to be in the book! It was taken off a poacher. Yes, many flowers and plants, birds, wild animals and fish are protected by the law. The little magicians from the Lenin Hills do all they can to help preserve the nature of

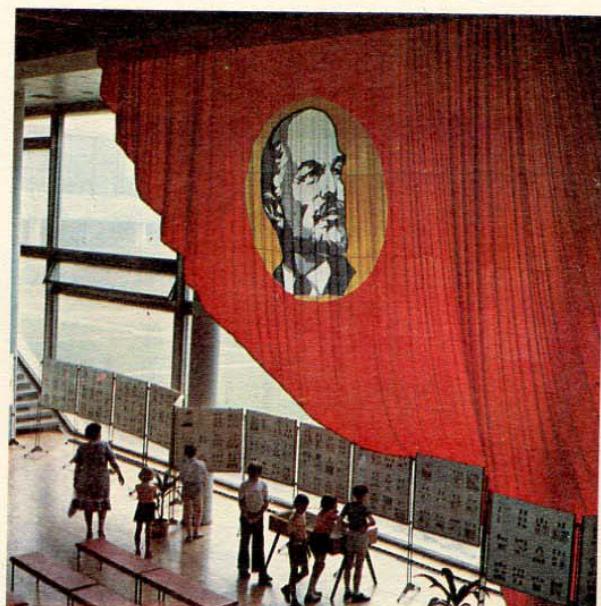
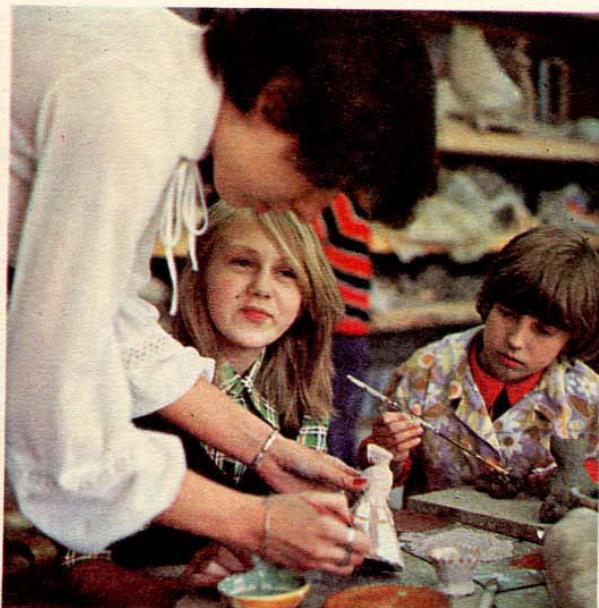


their country. Let's thank them for this and move on further. We've still lots of interesting things to see.

There is a magnetic corridor in the Palace. Of course, it's not magnetic in the literal sense, but as you walk along it, the walls attract your attention with magnetic force. What makes these walls so attractive? The pictures by very talented young artists. Look, who's

their easels. With an expression of deep concentration they are looking at their model, a boy who is posing and stroke after stroke filling in the details on the canvas.

The young sculptors' studio is on the floor below. Let's go down to them. The ordinary clay in the children's hands takes shape after a few nimble movements. Do you recognise him? Yes,



that? Why, Pushkin, the great Russian poet, of course. He looks slightly naive, but he's definitely Pushkin. Of course, the painting is far from perfect but the little artist is only six!

Look how much gold there is on that painting which is called *The Sun*. How gigantically powerful the tractor looks in the young artist's drawing. And this painting is of flowers in spring and it's called *The First Lilac*. Now look through that glass door and you'll see the authors of all these paintings at

it's Buratino* with a very long nose. The young sculptors not only use clay but also paper, plaster, wood and metal...

Let's say good-bye to the sculptors and move towards the sounds of songs which have been inviting us over for a long time. We're now visiting the Song and Dance Company of the Moscow City Pioneers' Palace.

Don't try counting everyone who's

* A wooden boy, the hero of A. Tolstoy's tale *The Golden Key or the Adventures of Buratino*.

singing, playing and dancing. The Company has several hundred members. The youngest singers here are called "Seedlings", the older ones "Stars" and those who consider themselves grown-ups "Jingle-bells".

The Palace's Company is very often on tour. Even when it is "at home" in Moscow, the young singers and dancers are swamped with invitations to schools,



pioneer camps, workers' and collective farmers' clubs. They also often appear on television. They have been on tour in the Ukraine, Kuban, Siberia, the Soviet Far East, Bulgaria and France. It's impossible to list all the numbers they perform. The company's repertoire includes the songs and dances of the peoples of the USSR and many other countries. Among their favourites are the Italian *Tarantella*, a gay Bulgarian round dance, the lyrical Japanese song *Among the Flowers* and an Indian song

about the rain. Ssh! Listen! The sounds of the singing Company which is named after its founder Vladimir Loktev are soaring over the Palace and the Lenin Hills:

*May voices always sound over
the Motherland.
Like peeling bells in unison,
May tender kind and loving eyes,
Always smile at us.*



*That's why our footsteps seem so
effortless,
And singing is easy, too,
For the road in front of us is boundless,
And calls us far ahead.*

But our road is going to take us to the young radio operators, sportsmen, sailors and motorists. Let's cross the square and visit them in the Palace's other building.

Look! What are those boys and girls doing walking about the square with some kind of pencil-cases in their

hands and earphones on their heads? They're radio operators! Look, antennae are sticking out of their pencil-cases and the sounds of the Morse code are coming out of their earphones. It's easy to guess that the pencil-cases are radios. But where's the transmitter? That's the whole point: they don't know where he is, except that he's somewhere in the Palace



grounds. But just you try and find him! The radio operators are searching for him. That's their game. It's called "Fox-hunting". The "fox" is the transmitter and the hunters are those looking for him by the Morse code signals. The one who finds him first is the winner. In the Palace we saw how the young technicians make transmitters and radios and now here they are testing them in a game in the Palace grounds.

To the right there's a stadium with a

football pitch. Fierce football matches are held here in summer and just as fierce ice hockey ones are held in winter. Behind us there's a winter swimming-pool where children are learning to swim. But we've reached our destination: the young sailors' club is in front of us.

Listen! A bell is ringing. Say, what time do you make it? Sixteen hundred



hours? That's right. So the young sailors are keeping watch very strictly. There they are! The fine, smart-looking fellows are slogging away at naval science, learning the naval ABC, getting to know how ships' instruments work, tying ship knots, answering questions on history. "What did the Russian Navy start from?" "The Russian Navy started with the yawl Peter the Great* sailed on as a boy."

* Peter the Great (1672-1725)—reformer of Russia and founder of the Russian Navy.

You've got to know so much! If you don't, what sort of sailor are you even when you're young and dreaming of sailing on the high seas? Only the best boys from the young sailors' club are sent on voyages on sea vessels: the best ship's boys, best young sailors, best petty officers, boat leaders, best motor-mechanics and navigators.

The young-sailors' club is next to the

learn how the engine works, how to drive and the Highway Code. Just three things but if you put them together, you get a driver.

There are rows of tiny tables in this room. Boys and girls are sitting pensively in pairs opposite each other and fighting fierce silent battles. However, it is not the contestants who are killed on the battlefield but silent



young motorists' club. Look, there's a map. The arrows from Moscow indicate the roads to Leningrad, Brest, Kiev, Minsk and Ulyanovsk. These are the young motorists' routes. There they are on a photograph by the entrance to a dugout of some Bryansk partisans and in another they're driving their cars along the sunny roads of the Ukraine.

They have facilities in the Palace on the Lenin Hills: cars, garages, driving lessons, but they've only got to study hard! And they certainly do! They

troops—chessmen. They are future Laskers, Capablancas, Alekhins, Botvinniks, Smyslovs and Karpovs, and the latter are looking hopefully down upon their successors from portraits. And you know, quite a number of famous masters have gone into the big world of chess from this small one.

But let's not disturb the boys and girls' concentration, and move on towards the thumping sounds of a bouncing ball and voices. It's a lively and noisy hand-ball game. The sounds



of balls are also coming from another room. That's a volleyball game. Short piercing screams are coming from a third room. The joyful ones mean victory, the sad ones—defeat: basketball players are a hot-tempered lot!

Our visit to the young magicians' Palace is drawing to an end. Of course, we weren't able to visit the 850 study groups attended by 15,000

Now let's go out into the street. The lights have been switched on in the Palace and it's ablaze with enticing magic light. Trumpets are sounding, drums are booming and songs are being sung. Smartly dressed children from all over Moscow are hurrying to their House of Knowledge, Work and Play.

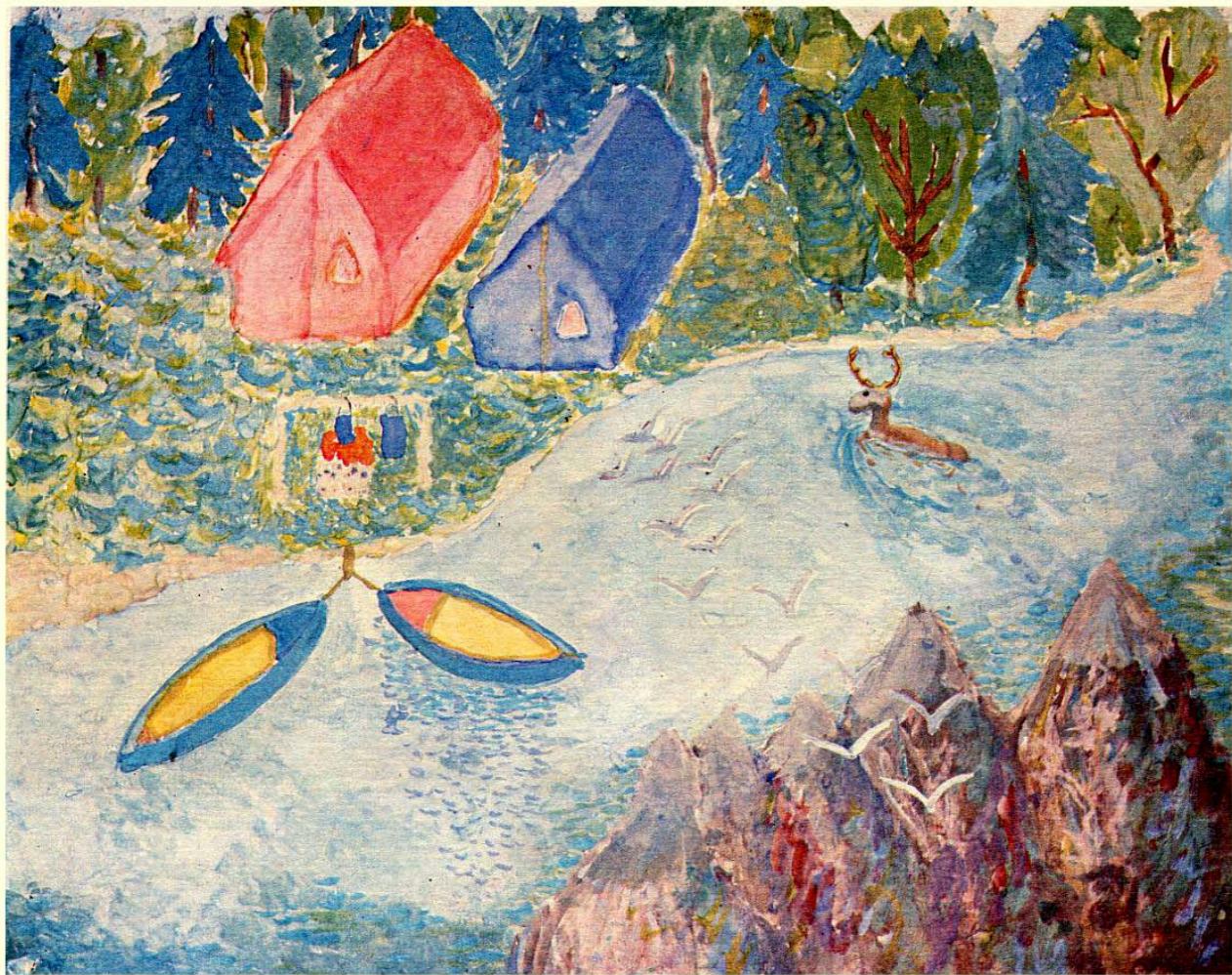
We wish you happiness and success



schoolchildren. If we had, our story would have taken up several books...



in everything you do and lasting friendship and joy!



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В. Голышкин

Маленькие волшебники большого дома

На английском языке

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